

TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT.

Annual Report
OF THE
Medical Officer of Health
FOR THE YEAR 1950

BY
HUGH MORRISON, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H.

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TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT

PUBLIC HEALTH STAFF, 1950

*Medical Officer of Health and Medical Superintendent of the
Taunton Isolation Hospital and Taunton
Tuberculosis Sanatorium, Taunton :*

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(appt. August, 1946).

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W. PLIMMER, C.R.S.I. (appt. July, 1950).

Additional Sanitary Inspector :

E. G. PAYNE, C.R.S.I. (appt. Feb., 1936).

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To :

THE CHAIRMAN AND MEMBERS OF THE
TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for 1950. The Report is set out in the manner of previous ones, so that comparison with former years can easily be made.

The following are a few general comments on points of interest or importance, some of which are dealt with in greater detail in the body of the report.

- (1) The National Health Service is now well established, and during the year 1950 this district appeared to be very satisfactorily provided for as regards medical care and attention. It should be recognised that the success and smooth working of this scheme depends to a large extent on the conscientious service of the general medical practitioners, whose work has increased to a considerable extent.
- (2) The Infant Mortality Rate for the year shows an increase over the 1949 figure from 23.01 to 39.47 per 1,000 live births. The 1950 rate is rather high, and represents 12 deaths in the first year of life, as compared with 7 in 1949. It is also higher than the rate for England and Wales as a whole, which stands at 29.80. A careful analysis has been made of these infant deaths, and it appears that the majority of them were not preventable in the present state of knowledge. By the laws of chance some years are bound to be worse than others in this respect, and where comparatively small numbers of cases are involved the rate per 1,000 is liable to give a wrong impression. There seems no reason to doubt that the obstetrical care and infant welfare work in the district is of a high standard.

- (3) New Byelaws dealing with the handling, wrapping and delivery of food, and with the sale of food in the open air were put into operation by the Council during the year. These were drafted to conform with the Model Byelaws on the subject produced by the Ministry of Health. They have been adopted in most parts of the country, and a special effort was made to ensure that they would apply to all districts of the County of Somerset, so that the situation would not arise that one district had the byelaws in force while an adjoining one had not. Food poisoning, which has been reported much more frequently and widely in England and Wales since the last war, has not provided a serious problem in the Taunton Rural District, and the year 1950 did not show any epidemics of this condition. This was fortunate but the danger is always present, in this district as elsewhere, and these new byelaws give useful additional powers to the Local Authority and its officers in prosecuting the campaign for clean food.
- (4) Applications continue to be made in large numbers for permission to station caravans and other movable structures in various parts of the district for use as dwellings. These fulfil a useful purpose at the present time in easing to some extent the housing shortage, but careful supervision has to be carried out to ensure that no nuisance or danger to public health arises. At the end of 1950 there were 35 movable dwellings stationed on individual sites in the rural district, and licences were also in force for 8 special caravan sites on which about 45 caravans were accommodated.
- (5) The year did not provide any striking figures in the field of epidemic diseases. Poliomyelitis was very prevalent in the country as a whole, and the 6 cases notified in the rural district gave an incidence rather higher than the average for England and Wales. Measles was responsible for 70 notifications which was a moderate number compared with the 271 cases of the previous year. Other infectious diseases were infrequent.
- (6) Nuisances arising from inefficient sewage disposal continued to be a major preoccupation of the Public Health Department. There is some prospect of improved conditions in this respect, particularly if and when the

Taunton Borough sewerage scheme is put into operation. According to plan, this should cope with most of the sewage from a large part of the rural district surrounding the Borough. A Sub-Committee of the Council did useful work along with officials during the year in visiting areas where conditions were especially bad, in exploring methods of relieving individual nuisances, and in working out a table of priorities as a guide to the urgency with which separate schemes should be pressed forward as opportunity arises.

I wish to thank the Clerk of the Council, the Staff of the Public Health Department, and the Matron and Staff of the Isolation Hospital for their willing assistance and co-operation.

I am,

Your obedient Servant,

HUGH MORRISON,

Medical Officer of Health.

TAUNTON RURAL DISTRICT

Statistics for the Year 1950

Area (in acres)	...	...	...	...	...	70,675
Estimate of resident population, mid-year 1950	...	...	...	...	...	18,960
Census population, 1931	...	...	...	...	...	17,101
No. of inhabited houses according to the Rate Books, on 31st December, 1950	...	...	...	...	...	5,179
Rateable value 31st December, 1950	...	...	...	...	...	£104,107
Sum represented by a 1d. Rate, 31st December, 1950	...	...	...	...	...	£430

Physical Features and Social Conditions

Taunton Rural District lies in the south-western region of Somerset, surrounding Taunton Borough, the County Town. It is roughly triangular in shape, with Taunton Borough situated near the middle of the triangle. The boundary of the district is formed on the north by the Rural Districts of Williton and Bridgwater; on the east and south-east by the Rural Districts of Langport and Chard; on the south by the County of Devon; on the south-west and west by the Rural District of Wellington.

There is considerable variation in the type of country found in different parts of the district: in the north and north-west there is high ground forming portions of the Quantock and Brendon Hills; in the south the land rises to the hill parish of Churchstanton lying in the Blackdowns; between these regions lies the fertile valley of Taunton Deane, with the ground falling towards the east to the flat moors and marshy ground surrounding the lower reaches of Tone and Parret. Geologically also, the formations vary. In the north are found chiefly old and new red sandstone; in the south, lower lias and upper greensand; the valley regions have new red marl, new red sandstone and alluvium.

The climate is equable, with an average annual rainfall of 36.6 ins., and an average mean daily temperature of about 41° F. in January and 62° F. in July.

Rich arable and pasture land covers most of the district, but some of the hill regions are in the rough uncultivated state, and the soil on the Blackdown Hills tends to be poor in quality. In the eastern parishes the land is subject to seasonal flooding. Communications are good, and almost all parts of the district are easily accessible by road. Following the Tone valley through the middle of the district runs one of the main lines of the Western Region of British Railways and three branch lines leave it at or near Taunton to run to the north, south and west.

There are thirty-two parishes with estimated populations varying from 80 to 2,650. Habitations are widely scattered over these parishes, but there are several sizeable villages, the largest being Bishops Lydeard, Bishops Hull, Lydeard St. Lawrence, North Curry and Trull.

Most of the inhabitants are engaged in some form of agriculture, dairy farming being particularly important. General farming is also largely practised, and allied activities are withy growing and basket-making, fruit farming and cider-making. There is a paper mill in the district which employs a fair number of people, and another source of employment for men is stone-quarrying which is carried out on a considerable scale. Many of the residents in the rural district travel daily to Taunton to work in factories and other establishments.

Extracts from the Vital Statistics of the Year

Live Births :—

	Total	M.	F.	} Birth Rate per 1,000 of the esti- mated resident population ... 16.03
Legitimate ...	285	152	133	
Illegitimate ...	19	7	12	
	<u>304</u>	<u>159</u>	<u>145</u>	

Still Births—Total 7.

Rate per 1,000 total (live and still) births ...	22.51
Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population ...	0.37

Deaths—Total 215.

Rate per 1,000 of the estimated resident population ...	11.34
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Deaths from Puerperal Causes—Nil.

	Deaths.	Rates per 1,000 births.
From Puerperal Sepsis ...	—	—
From other Maternal Causes ...	—	—

Deaths of Infants under 1 year of age—Total 12.

Legitimate ...	11
Illegitimate ...	1
Rate for all infants per 1,000 live births ...	39.47
,, legitimate infants per 1,000 legitimate live births ...	38.59
,, illegitimate infants per 1,000 illegitimate live births ...	52.63

Deaths from Cancer (all ages) ...	31
,, Measles (all ages) ...	—
,, Whooping Cough (all ages) ...	—
,, Diarrhoea (under two years of age) ...	—

Rates for England and Wales as a whole :—

Live births per 1,000 civilian population ...	15.80
Still births ,, ,, ,, ...	0.37
Deaths, all causes ,, ,, ,, ...	11.60
Maternal Mortality, all causes, per 1,000 total (live and still) births ...	0.86
Infant Mortality, all causes, per 1,000 total (live and still) births ...	29.80

Causes of Death during 1950

	M.	F.	Total.
Tuberculosis, respiratory	—	1	1
Tuberculosis, other	—	1	1
Syphilitic disease	—	—	—
Diphtheria	—	—	—
Whooping cough	—	—	—
Meningococcal infections	—	—	—
Acute poliomyelitis	—	—	—
Measles	—	—	—
Other infective and parasitic diseases	—	—	—
Malignant neoplasm, stomach	4	3	7
Malignant neoplasm, lung, bronchus	—	—	—
Malignant neoplasm, breast	—	5	5
Malignant neoplasm, uterus	—	1	1
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	11	7	18
Leukæmia, aleukæmia	—	—	—
Diabetes	—	1	1
Vascular lesions of nervous system	12	19	31
Coronary disease, angina	12	7	19
Hypertension with heart disease	1	4	5
Other heart disease	23	30	53
Other circulatory disease	5	5	10
Influenza	2	—	2
Pneumonia	1	2	3
Bronchitis	9	1	10
Other disease of respiratory system	2	—	2
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	2	—	2
Gastritis, enteritis and diarrhœa	—	—	—
Nephritis and nephrosis	3	3	6
Hyperplasia of prostate	—	—	—
Pregnancy, childbirth, abortion	—	—	—
Congenital malformations	1	1	2
Other defined and ill-defined diseases	12	11	23
Motor vehicle accidents	3	—	3
All other accidents	4	3	7
Suicide	3	—	3
Homicide and operations of war	—	—	—
All Causes—Total	110	105	215

Infant Mortality during 1950

	Under 1 week	1 to 2 weeks	3 to 4 weeks	1 to 6 months	6 to 12 months	Total under 1 year
Birth Injury	1	—	—	—	—	1
Septicæmia	—	1	—	—	—	1
Prematurity	3	1	—	—	—	4
Pneumonia	—	—	—	2	—	2
Rickets	—	—	—	—	1	1
Congenital Heart Disease ...	1	—	—	—	—	1
Subarachnoid Hæmorrhage ...	—	—	—	1	—	1
Melæna Neonatorum	1	—	—	—	—	1
Total ...	6	2	—	3	1	12

General Provision of Health Services for the Area

Domiciliary Services

There are five general medical practitioners living and carrying on the main part of their practice in different areas of the district. In addition to this, most of the Taunton Borough practitioners have some rural district residents on their lists, and there is also, as would be expected, some overlap from the surrounding rural districts in the provision of medical attention. There are adequate arrangements, when required, for domiciliary consultation with consultants serving the Taunton area, and speaking generally, the practice of medicine in the district is of a high standard. The provisions for domiciliary nursing are satisfactory and a good beginning has been made with the Home Help Service administered by the Somerset County Council.

Hospital Services

The Hospital Services of the district are administered by the Taunton Hospital Management Committee, under the general direction of the S.W. Regional Hospital Board. Some of the provisions for the needs of various types of patient are detailed below :—

(1) General Medical and Surgical

The Taunton and Somerset Hospital together with Musgrove Park Hospital which is also situated in the Borough of Taunton,

and which is probably eventually destined to supersede the first-named establishment, cater for most medical and surgical conditions. Musgrove Park Hospital takes most of the adult cases, and also has a comprehensive Pædiatric Department. The Taunton and Somerset Hospital is in the meantime dealing with Orthopædics, Ophthalmology and Ear, Nose and Throat work. It also houses the Casualty Department for the area. Both hospitals have out-patient facilities in addition to in-patient beds. Certain cases requiring special investigation or treatment such as neurosurgery or radiotherapy are referred to Bristol Hospitals for this purpose.

(2) **Infectious Diseases**

Cases of infectious disease from Taunton Rural District are sent to the Taunton Isolation Hospital, situated in the Borough of Taunton. This hospital was administered up to 4th July, 1948, by a Joint Hospital Board, representing the various districts from which cases were admitted. Since that date, administration has passed to the Regional Hospital Board, with day to day management being carried out by the Taunton Hospital Management Committee. There are three large wards for the isolation and treatment of patients suffering from the commoner epidemic diseases, but these have become less useful since Diphtheria has become a rare condition, chiefly owing to the success of the national immunisation campaign, and since Scarlet Fever has apparently entered a mild phase in which most of the cases can be successfully isolated and nursed at home. The bulk of the Isolation Hospital work is done in a more recently constructed cubicle block. The hospital has been admitting in the past year or two many cases, especially among children of various pyrexial and nutritional illnesses not coming into the strict category of notifiable diseases, which would formerly have been treated in General Hospitals. Home isolation is carried out wherever the home conditions are satisfactory. Most cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum are admitted to the Isolation Hospital and also cases of Puerperal Pyrexia.

(3) **Tuberculosis**

Cases of pulmonary and non-pulmonary Tuberculosis come under the Regional Hospital Board for treatment, which is supervised by the Chest Physicians for the area. The Sanatoria are at Quantock, Wincanton and Taunton for pulmonary cases. Cases requiring Orthopædic treatment are admitted to the Chard Sanatorium and to Bath Orthopædic Hospital. Pre-tubercular children and children with tubercular glands are sent to Compton Bishop Children's Home, near Axbridge.

(4) **Poliomyelitis**

Suspected cases are sent for diagnosis to the Taunton Isolation Hospital. If the condition is confirmed they are seen by Regional Specialists who arrange for continuation treatment either as out-patients or as in-patients at Bath Orthopædic Hospital.

(5) **Small Pox**

Provision for the accommodation of cases of small pox is made at a hospital at Cossington, near Bridgwater. Fortunately there has been no need to use the institution for this purpose for many years.

(6) **Chronic Sick**

Patients are received into hospitals, chiefly those in Taunton and Wellington, which have now passed from Public Assistance administration to that of the Regional Hospital Board. The status and reputation of these institutions is improving, more or less rapidly, as their association with the less desirable features of the old Poor Law fades from public memory. A geriatric service for the Taunton area is in process of development.

Powers now exist under the National Assistance Act, 1948, Section 47, for the compulsory removal to a suitable institution of persons who are not able to devote to themselves and are not receiving from other people, proper care and attention. There are adequate safeguards against misuse of these powers, but cases do crop up from time to time where they are very useful and in the true interest of the person concerned. The onus is thrown upon the Medical Officer of Health to investigate these cases and to advise on whether these powers ought to be invoked. No cases required to be dealt with in this way in the Taunton Rural District during 1950, although preliminary steps were taken on one or two occasions and these resulted in removal to an institution without compulsion having to be applied.

(7) **Mental Sick**

Cases are admitted to the Mental Hospital at Tone Vale, near Taunton. The psychiatric specialists conduct out-patients' clinics for the area, and it is felt that now, more than ever before, mental patients are having the benefit of treatment at an earlier and more hopeful stage of the disease.

Mentally defective cases are well provided for at Sandhill Park Hospital which is situated in Taunton Rural District.

Clinics and Treatment Centres

Tuberculosis

Clinics for patients suffering from this disease, and for the supervision of suspects and contacts, are held by the Chest Physicians at Musgrove Park Hospital. There is an After-Care Committee working in co-operation with these clinics. Mass radiography has been carried out from time to time on various groups of the County population, by a team working from a centre in Bristol, but this service has not been called upon to deal with residents in Taunton Rural District.

Venereal Disease

A combined Clinic and Treatment Centre is carried on at the Taunton and Somerset Hospital which caters for male and female patients of this and surrounding districts. This centre has now come under the administration of the Regional Hospital Board. Early cases of syphilis are usually sent to Frenchay Hospital, Bristol, for a fortnight's intensive penicillin treatment as in-patients. Afterwards they continue observation and treatment at the Taunton Clinic.

Maternity and Child Welfare

The Maternity and Child Welfare Acts are administered by the County Council, under whose supervision are also the Health Visitors and Midwives practising within the area. There is an excellent Maternity Home in the Urban District of Wellington at which some of the mothers from Taunton Rural District are confined. Obstetric Consultants in Taunton are available for consultation with Medical Practitioners in the District. Abnormal and complicated cases can be admitted for hospital treatment when necessary. Every case of Puerperal Pyrexia and Maternal Mortality is investigated by the Medical Staff of the County Council.

Laboratory Facilities

The Public Health Laboratory Service has a Laboratory in Taunton which undertakes the bacteriological examination of swabs, blood, fæces and sputum, etc. This service is available also to the

Doctors practising in the District. Bacteriological and chemical analyses are also undertaken for the examination of milk, foods, water supplies and sewage effluents, etc. The co-operation and assistance of the Public Health Laboratory Staff in investigating all types of bacteriological and epidemiological problems is of the greatest value.

Ambulance Facilities

Ambulance transport for all cases has now become the responsibility of the Somerset County Council. A central ambulance department has been set up which arranges for vehicles to be provided as required.

Sanitary Circumstances of the Area

Water Supply

The Rural Water Supplies and Sewerage Act, 1944, places at the disposal of the Minister of Health a sum of £15,000,000 to assist schemes executed after the war for the provision or improvement of water supply and of sewerage facilities in Rural Districts, regard being taken, amongst other things, to the needs of industry and agriculture. The Council have under consideration a post-war scheme for the extension of a piped water supply to parishes requiring it. The provision of such a supply is most urgently needed in the following cases:—Cheddon Fitzpaine, Creech St. Michael (Adsborough), Durston (the village), Kingston (the village, Greenway, Parsonage Lane, Fulford and Dodhill), Otterford (Bishopswood), Tolland (the village), West Hatch (the village and higher portion of the parish), West Monkton (the village, Cherry Grove and Gotton).

Some of the parishes mentioned are within the limits of supply of the Taunton Corporation Water Undertaking, and any supply required in them must be obtained by application to the Corporation. The following parishes are within the limits of supply of the Taunton Corporation:—Bishops Hull, Cheddon Fitzpaine, Corfe, Creech St. Michael, Kingston, Norton Fitzwarren, Orchard Portman, Pitminster, Ruishton, Staplegrove, Thornfalcon, Trull and West Monkton.

Three water undertakings are owned by the Taunton Rural District Council. One is at Westleigh in the parish of Lydeard St. Lawrence, and another in the parishes of West Bagborough and

Cothelstone. The third water undertaking is that of the Crown Lands Estate, known as the Portman Supply. During the course of the year 1949 this supply was acquired by the Rural District Council. It is chlorinated before delivery to the consumers. Quarterly bacteriological analyses of the four supplies showed the water to be satisfactory.

The piped water supply to other parts of the District has been, on the whole, bacteriologically satisfactory, several examinations having been made during the course of the year. The supplies have also been satisfactory in quantity apart from fairly severe summer shortage in the Portman Supply. This shortage is likely to recur in future years and the problem in the parishes affected, namely, West Hatch, North Curry, Stoke St. Gregory and Thornfalcon, is unlikely to be solved until the new scheme of supply for these areas has been put into operation. Some of the wells in the district yield satisfactory waters but others are very liable to contamination. With these, chlorination or other methods sometimes result in a pure supply but many of the wells are shallow and can never be relied upon to give a constant wholesome supply. In these cases boiling of the water is usually advised and the problem will not be satisfactorily solved until piped water is taken to the properties concerned. In the parish of West Hatch there was again a serious shortage of well water during the summer; this is a recurring trouble and the projected water scheme for the Eastern parishes of the District will be most beneficial to this area.

During the course of the year a piped water supply was provided for the village of Stoke St. Mary. The water was made available and the work carried out by Taunton Corporation on behalf of the Rural District Council. Work was continued on the provision of piped water supply for the district of Stapley and this scheme was due for completion during the year 1951. Piped water was laid on in the usual way to all Council houses which were completed during 1950.

Taunton Borough have had surveys carried out for the building of a large impounding reservoir at Clatworthy in the region of the headwaters of the river Tone. If this scheme is brought into operation there will probably be a large surplus of water over and above the needs of the Borough and this should make available an abundant supply for the Taunton Rural District, but it will, of course, be a considerable time before these plans materialise.

The following return presents in tabular form the position as to the distribution of piped water supplies in the District :—

PARISH.	Area of Parish. Acres.	No. of houses in Parish.	No. of houses having a piped water supply under pressure into or on to the house (including those with a tap outside only).	Of the houses not included in 3 (1), the number having within 100 yards of a water main available for a supply.	Of the houses not in 3 (1) & (2) the number that are in villages, hamlets or groups of 20 or more houses so placed as to lie within a circle $\frac{1}{4}$ mile in diameter.	Of the houses not connected to a public sewer the number in villages, hamlets or groups of 20 or more houses so placed as to lie within a circle $\frac{1}{4}$ mile in diameter.
	1	2	3 (1)	3 (2)	3 (3)	4
Ash Priors ...	641	36	19	11	—	—
Bickenhall ...	1143	45	36	—	—	—
Bishops Hull ...	1283	447	436	25	—	20
Bishops Lydeard ...	4832	539	318	42	—	23
Cheddon Fitzpaine ...	1883	132	38	19	38	38
Churchstanton ...	5435	155	—	4	—	—
Combe Florey ...	1382	69	55	—	—	22
Corfe ...	1165	77	76	—	—	—
Cothelstone ...	1455	40	16	—	—	—
Creech St. Michael ...	2298	303	299	97	—	172
Curland ...	648	39	20	—	—	—
Durston ...	1013	51	—	—	—	43
Halse ...	1320	83	43	15	—	58
Hatch Beauchamp ...	1408	128	105	5	—	—
Kingston ...	2584	231	29	—	79	123
Lydeard St. Lawrence ...	2748	118	79	2	—	39
North Curry ...	5822	403	331	30	—	—
Norton Fitzwarren ...	2054	236	190	71	—	—
Orchard Portman ...	1665	50	22	—	—	—
Otterford ...	2446	107	—	—	34	—
Pitminster ...	5780	383	240	88	—	34 (Pitminster)
Ruishton ...	1027	143	117	31	—	33 (Blagdon)
Staple Fitzpaine ...	3029	58	43	—	—	64 (Staplehay)
Staplegrove ...	1027	87	51	42	—	49
Stoke St. Gregory ...	4135	352	348	3	—	114
Stoke St. Mary ...	2019	158	62	9	—	—
Thornfalcon ...	822	46	41	—	—	—
Tolland ...	842	24	2	—	—	—
Trull ...	2172	244	192	36	—	140
West Bagborough ...	2006	113	100	—	—	57
West Hatch ...	1619	87	9	—	—	—
West Monkton ...	2972	392	235	101	20	110 (Bathpool)
						101 (M. Heath.)
						39 (Village)

Sewerage and Sewage Disposal

Proper sewage disposal is not only an amenity but it is a necessity and is essential whenever a piped water supply has been provided. Pail closets and privy middens are most undesirable because they are more often than not badly attended to owing to the unpleasant work connected with them. A multiplication of privately owned cesspools and septic tanks is also undesirable and these have been increasing in number because of the addition of water closets and baths to houses having a piped water supply.

The Rural District as a whole is very poorly sewered, but the Council are alive to this fact and are very anxious to effect improvements as soon as economic conditions in the country permit. Schemes have been prepared by the Consulting Engineers to deal with various parts of the district, and it is hoped that a beginning can be made with these in the near future. A special Sub-Committee of the Council was constituted during the course of the year to inspect, along with Council officials, certain areas of the district in which sewage disposal arrangements were particularly bad, and a rough scale of priorities was drawn up to act as a guide in deciding on the schemes which should receive most urgent consideration.

During the course of the year a number of cases of alleged nuisance arising from the effluents of septic tanks were investigated. Some of the complaints were fully justified and various measures were taken in an attempt to improve matters.

Only 7 parishes out of 32 in the District have sewage disposal works of their own, these being the parishes of :—

Bishops Hull—though some 30 houses or so are not connected with the main sewer. *Bishops Lydeard*—some of the Council houses in this parish are not connected with the sewer. *Combe Florey*—the disposal works here serves its purpose for the time being but is not large enough to deal with sewage from any more houses. *Corfe*—new disposal works have recently been constructed in this parish because of a very objectionable nuisance which existed there. The piping involved in carrying out this work will be made use of when the major scheme for the Rural District as a whole is brought into operation. *Hatch Beauchamp*—these works are very old and entirely unsatisfactory. A considerable portion of this village is not sewered at all. *North Curry*—the work are in the nature of a sewage farm. They are overloaded and the land is suffering from “Sewage sickness”. *Norton Fitzwarren*—recent disposal works have been constructed here and should prove ample and satisfactory for a further increase in population.

A large Sewage Disposal Works to be situated in the parish of Creech St. Michael is planned for the Borough of Taunton and when this is constructed it is intended that a great deal of the sewage from the adjacent parts of the Rural District will be dealt with at these works.

Refuse Collection

The collection and disposal of household refuse operates in all parishes in the district, being fortnightly in the parishes of Bishops Lydeard and Bishops Hull, and monthly in the remainder of the district. The scheme is operated under contract by a local haulage firm using vehicles which, from a public health point of view, are far from satisfactory. A report has been submitted to the appropriate Committee of the Council for modernisation of the service, and it is hoped that a new scheme will be put into operation in the early part of 1951. Refuse is tipped into disused clay pits in the parish of Creech St. Michael by semi-controlled methods. This tip is practically full and a new tip will be brought into operation during 1951.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA

The following tabular statement is furnished by the Sanitary Inspectors :—

Number and nature of inspections during the year :—

Dwelling houses	197
Number of dwelling houses repaired	20
" " with repairs in hand	—
Voluntarily closed	—
Slaughter houses	261
Bakehouses	39
Other premises where food is prepared or sold	142
Dairies and Milkshops	5
Infectious Disease enquiries and disinfections, etc.	18
Miscellaneous	73

Number of Notices served during the year :—

Informal Notices	21
Statutory Notices	—

Result of service of Notices :—

Total Notices complied with	17
Notices standing over at the end of 1950	4

Water Samples

94 samples of water have been obtained for bacteriological examination during the year. Of this number 55 have been taken from private supplies, and reported on as follows :—

Grade 1.	14 samples.
2.	2 „
3.	7 „
4.	32 „
	<hr/>
	55 „
	<hr/>

Advice on improving existing supplies and warnings against drinking water without boiling have been issued in all appropriate cases.

39 samples of water have been obtained from public supplies in the area. The results are as follows :—

West Bagborough	Grade 1.	1 sample.	
(Not chlorinated)	2.	— „	
	3.	2 „	
	4.	2 „	
		<hr/>	5
Bishops Lydeard and West Bagborough	Grade 1.	1 „	
(Not chlorinated)	2.	— „	
	3.	3 „	
	4.	8 „	
		<hr/>	12
Bishops Lydeard	Grade 1.	2 „	
(Not chlorinated)	2.	— „	
	3.	1 „	
	4.	1 „	
		<hr/>	4
Portman Supply	Grade 1.	2 „	
(Chlorinated)	2.	2 „	
	3.	1 „	
	4.	8 „	
		<hr/>	13
Lydeard St. Lawrence ...	Grade 1.	2 „	
(Not chlorinated)	2.	1 „	
	3.	— „	
	4.	2 „	
		<hr/>	5
			<hr/>
			39
			<hr/>

Investigations have been made in conjunction with the Surveyor to the Council in cases where reports fall short of the required standard—recent samples have now shown a marked improvement.

One chemical analysis has been taken at Otterford which proved to be satisfactory.

Smoke Abatement

Several complaints have been made during the year in connection with a factory chimney. The owners of the premises concerned have been interviewed, and every effort has been made to overcome the extensive quantity of black smoke being discharged from the chimney stack. Some improvement has been made and I understand that the factory's Directors have had expert advice from the Ministry of Fuel and Power on the present stoking arrangements. The nuisance has been reduced in intensity, but the Directors are still striving to obtain much better results.

Swimming Baths and Pools

There are not any in the area.

Eradication of Bed Bugs

No cases occurred during the year.

Schools

Inspection of the schools in the area was carried out during July, 1950, special emphasis being made on water supply and sanitary accommodation. A full report of the findings was submitted to the County Council via the County Sanitary Officer.

Offensive Trades

There are two offensive trades in the district within the meaning of Section 107 of the Public Health Act, 1946. One is that of tripe boiling and the other a Knacker's Yard for the provision of dog and cat food. Several minor infringements have been discovered at the Knacker's Yard from time to time which have been abated by informal action.

Bakehouses

There are 13 bakehouses in the district and 39 visits were made to them during the year. Several minor defects have been noted and dealt with by informal action. In the case of one of the largest

bakehouses in the district plans have been submitted to and approved by the Council for the construction of a complete new sanitary block and washing accommodation.

Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949

The number of persons registered with the Council as distributors of milk in the area is 46.

Milk (Special Designation) (Pasteurised and Sterilised Milk) Regulation, 1949

Two dealers' licences are in force under the above Regulation.

Milk (Special Designation) (Raw Milk) Regulation, 1949

Seven dealers' licences are in force under the above Regulation.

Ice Cream

The number of retailers of this produce in the area is 19 ; of this number one only is an actual manufacturer. The remainder of the retailers sell pre-packed ice cream, which is stored in properly constructed refrigerators.

Meat Supply

Under the Live Stock (Restrictions on Slaughtering) Order, 1940, slaughtering of animals for human consumption is carried out only at certain specified slaughter-houses ; one of these slaughter-houses is situated at Creech St. Michael in the Council's district and is used mainly for the slaughtering of calves from a very wide area. During the summer months the number killed per week falls to approximately 200, but during the period commencing September and continuing to March, the number rises to approximately 700 to 800 per week. A new system of inspection was commenced in July, 1950, involving a cursory ante-mortem inspection of the calves, plus the examination of all offal as it is taken from the carcase. This is the only method which ensures that identification of offal and carcasses can be achieved, as there is insufficient space in the slaughter-house for keeping offal and carcasses together. Since this scheme has been put into operation a tremendous amount of overtime has been put in on this work, including regular Saturday and Sunday inspections, the benefits are obvious in the increased standard of meat

inspection, and also it is now possible in cases of tuberculosis in calves to identify the carcase, and by noting the grading number to obtain the owner's name and address. The location of the disease and the name of the owner is forwarded to the Animal Health Division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in Taunton for further investigation. In many cases this informaton has resulted in the tracing and subsequent destruction of the dam concerned. In my opinion this aspect of meat inspection has been overlooked in the past as it is a positive way of locating diseased animals by the observance of actual post-mortem conditions. One point, however, needs special mention, and that refers to the question of marking calves. The present method of sticking gummed labels on the calf is unsatisfactory, as during wet weather or in the course of transport this label becomes detached, and of course it is then impossible to trace the origin of the animal concerned. If some more permanent method of marking can be adopted even better results would be obtained.

	Cattle excluding Cows.	Cows.	Calves.	Sheep and Lambs.	Pigs.
Number killed (if known)	0	0	22,248	85	2
Number inspected ...	0	0	22,248	85	2
All diseases except Tuberculosis.					
Whole carcasses condemned	0	0	54	6	0
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	0	0	84	8	0
Percentage of the number inspected affected with disease other than Tuberculosis	0	0	0.62	16.4	0
Tuberculosis only.					
Whole carcasses condemned	0	0	4	0	0
Carcases of which some part or organ was con- demned	0	0	21	0	0
Percentage of the number inspected affected with Tuberculosis	0	0	0.11	0	0

The following were also condemned as being unfit for food :—

Sugar	...	63½ lbs.	Tinned Foods	...	57 tins.
Beef	...	1,425 lbs.	Flour	...	462½ lbs.
Ham	...	11 lbs.			

Food Poisoning Outbreaks

No outbreaks of Food Poisoning have occurred in the District in the year under review.

FACTORIES ACT, 1937

The inspection of factories and workshops in the district from a public health point of view is carried out by the staff of the Public Health Department. Routine visits are paid to the various premises and the following table gives particulars of this work. It is to be noted that the term Factories as used in this connection now includes Workshops, which accounts for the large number on the Register in this Rural District.

1.—**Inspections** for purposes of provisions as to health (including inspections made by Sanitary Inspectors):—

Premises.	Number on Register.	Number of		
		Inspection.	Written notices.	Occupiers prosecuted.
(i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are to be enforced by Local Authorities	14	15	0	0
(ii) Factories not included in (i) to which Section 7 applies	85	62	0	0
(iii) Other Premises under the Act (excluding out-workers' premises)	0	0	0	0
Total ...	99	77	0	0

2.—Cases in which defects were found :—

Particulars.	Number of cases in which defects were found.				Number of cases in which prosecutions were instituted.
	Found.	Remedied	Referred		
			To H.M. Inspector	By H.M. Inspector	
Want of cleanliness (S.1)	0	0	0	0	0
Overcrowding (S.2) ...	0	0	0	0	0
Unreasonable temperature (S.3)	0	0	0	0	0
Inadequate ventilation (S.4)	0	0	0	0	0
Ineffective drainage of floors (S.6)	0	0	0	0	0
Sanitary conveniences (S.7):—					
(a) Insufficient ...	0	0	0	0	0
(b) Unsuitable or defective	1	1	0	0	0
(c) Not separate for sexes	0	0	0	0	0
Other offences (not including offences relating to Homework) ...	0	0	0	0	0
Total ...	1	1	0	0	0

HOUSING

There have been no cases of legal overcrowding during the year.

Three houses condemned under the Housing Act, 1936, at Athelney, North Curry and West Monkton had their licences renewed. This re-occupation of condemned houses is not an infringement of Sec. 155 (3) of the Housing Act, 1936, as it is an emergency measure resulting from the past war and designed to meet the housing needs of the influx of agricultural workers and covered by Regulation 68a Defence (General) Regulations, 1939. These houses have been inspected by the Medical Officer of Health, who reported to the Council the minimum repairs, etc., necessary to bring them into such a condition of cleanliness and repair as to be reasonably capable of being used as a temporary measure for housing purposes without detriment to health. Where the owner has complied with the recommendations, the Council may issue a licence authorising the occupation of a house, but the licence is not operative for more than six months at a time.

The Council have had under consideration the post-war housing needs of the District (a) to replace unfit dwellings; (b) to abate overcrowding; (c) for other reasons.

A survey of housing in the district under £16 rateable value, excluding Council houses and houses erected after 1930 was carried out and the following tables give the position as it existed at the end of 1949. The figures provide useful data in assessing the housing needs in various parts of the district :—

(1) Houses satisfactory in all respects	458 or 14.1% of the total.
(2) Houses with minor defects ...	2,072 or 63.8% do.
(3) Houses with major defects and/or requiring structural alterations	366 or 11.3% do.
(4) Houses provisionally graded as unfit	350 or 10.8% do.

The houses in categories (2) and (3) as far as existing conditions permit will be improved so that they may be placed in a higher grade. Of the houses provisionally graded as unfit, 8 were

purchased by private individuals, on becoming vacant, and the new owners reconstructed them under licence and made them satisfactory in all respects.

The survey also showed that—

- 14.6% of the houses were connected to the sewer.
- 25.5% of the houses had septic tanks for sewage disposal.
- 59.9% of the houses used pail closets or similar types as their sanitary accommodation.
- 62.4% of the houses were supplied from the main water supply.
- 31.5% of the houses were supplied from wells.
- 6.1% of the houses were supplied from springs.
- 49.0% of the houses were provided with wash-up sinks.
- 14.7% of the houses were provided with baths.
- 9.5% of the houses used gas for lighting, some of these also using it for heating and/or cooking.
- 35.2% of the houses used electricity for lighting, some of these also using it for heating and/or cooking.

The Council's building programme was as follows :—

Parish.	Number completed during year 1950			Number under construction at 31st Dec. 1950
Churchstanton	—	6
Hatch Beauchamp	8	—
North Curry	18	4
Norton Fitzwarren	10	—
Pitminster	8	—
Stoke St. Gregory	2	—
Stoke St. Mary	8	—
Trull	4	—
West Monkton	8	4
			<u>66</u>	<u>14</u>

The following table shows the Parishes in which the Council have erected houses under the various Acts :—

Parish.	Address.	Number of Houses.
Bishops Hull ...	1/70 Smithy Cottages ...	70
do. ...	20/35 Mountway Cottages ...	16
		— 86
Bishops Lydeard ...	1/8 Gore Cottages ...	8
do. ...	1/10 Pound Lane ...	10
do. ...	1/12 Mill Lane Cottages ...	12
do. ...	1/30 Halfyard Cottages ...	30
		— 60
Cheddon Fitzpaine ...	1/8 School Cottages ...	8
Churchstanton ...	1/4 Stapley Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/4 Church Road Cottages ...	4
		— 8
Combe Florey ...	1/4 Meadowside ...	4
Corfe ...	1/4 Brook Cottages ...	4
Creech St. Michael ..	1/8 Ryes Terrace ...	8
do. ..	1/6 Charlton Lane Cottages ...	6
do. ...	1/4 Cheads Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/16 Rocketts Cottages ...	16
do. ...	1/10 Creechwood Terrace ...	10
		— 44
Curland ...	1/4 Castle View ...	4
Hatch Beauchamp ...	1/4 Palmers Green Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/8 Crimthorne Cotts ...	8
		— 12
Kingston ...	1/6 Parks Cottages ...	6
do. ...	1 and 2 Chaces ...	2
do. ...	1/8 Greenway Terrace ...	8
do. ...	1/4 Fulford Cottages ...	4
do. ...	1/10 Parsonage Cottages ...	10
		— 30
Lydeard St. Lawrence..	1/4 Nethercott Road ...	4
do. ...	1/8 Cross Croft ...	8
		— 12

Parish.		Address.		Number of Houses.
North Curry	...	1/6 Oxen Lane	...	6
do.	...	1/4 Backham Cottages	...	4
do.	...	1/10 Croft Cottages	...	10
do.	...	1/8 Lillesdon Terrace	...	8
do.	...	1/8 Cricket Cottages	...	8
do.	...	1/14 Town Close	...	14
do.	...	21/24 do.	...	4
				— 54
Norton Fitzwarren	...	1/4 Burnshill Terrace	...	4
do.	...	1/24 Rectory Road Cottages	...	24
do.	...	1/10 Station Road Cottages	...	10
do.	...	1/4 Manleys Cottages	...	4
do.	...	1/4 Court Cottages	...	4
do.	...	1/10 The Crescent	...	10
				— 56
Pitminster	...	1/8 Littleham Cottages	...	8
do.	...	1/8 Colleylake Cottages	...	8
				— 16
Ruishton	...	1/5 Ruishton Lane Cottages	...	5
do.	...	1/3 Lipe Lane Cottages	...	3
do.	...	1/4 Slades Cottages	...	4
do.	...	1/12 Steart Cottages	...	12
				— 24
Staplegrove	...	1/6 Hillhead Cottages	...	6
Stoke St. Gregory	...	1/16 Willey Road	...	16
do.	...	1/8 Stathe Cottages	...	8
do.	...	1/20 Woodhill Terrace	...	20
do.	...	1 and 2 Meare Green Cottages	...	2
				— 46
Stoke St. Mary	...	1/4 Homefield Cottages	...	4
do.	...	1/8 Pattens Cottages	...	8
				— 12
Thornfalcon	...	1/8 Glebe Cottages	...	8
Trull	...	1 and 2 Horts Cottages	...	2
do.	...	7/14 Mill Lane	...	8
do.	...	1/4 The Green	...	4
				— 14

Parish	Address			Houses Number of		
West Bagborough	...	1/10	Vale View Cottages	...	10	
do.	...	1/4	Hill View Cottages	...	4	
do.	...	1/4	South View Cottages	...	4	
do.	...	1/4	Parkside	...	4	
					— 22	
West Monkton	...	1/4	Titley Cottages	...	4	
do.	...	1/4	Brittons Ash Cottages	...	4	
do.	...	1/6	Hyde Lane Cottages	...	6	
do.	...	1/14	School Road Cottages	...	14	
do.	...	1/8	Elms Estate	...	8	
do.	...	21/54	do.	...	34	
do.	...	9/16	do.	...	8	
					— 78	
TOTAL					...	608

Of the above total of 608 houses, 204 were built to replace houses dealt with by Slum Clearance in previous years, under the Housing Acts of 1930 and 1936.

Ex-Military Camps

In September, 1946, the Taunton Rural District Council took over the administration of Camps at Pyrland, Courtlands and Sandhill Park on behalf of the Ministry of Health. These camps had been occupied unofficially by a process of “squatting”. In 1947 a similar camp at Culmhead was taken over. The accommodation in the camps consists of Nissen or similar type of huts, some of which have been modified to make them more suitable for family occupation. They are far from ideal from the housing point of view, and their use can only be looked upon as a temporary expedient, but at least they provide some relief in the present desperate housing shortage.

The number of occupied huts in each of the three camps at the end of 1950 was as follows :—

Courtlands	...	...	...	...	12
Sandhill Park	...	...	...	...	131
Culmhead	...	...	...	...	19

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES

The following table gives the number of notifications received for various notifiable diseases (other than Tuberculosis), their age groups and the notification rates compared with those of England and Wales, and the number admitted to the Isolation Hospital :—

Diseases.	No. of Notifications.	AGE GROUPS.								No. admitted to Isolation Hospital.
		0—	1—	3—	5—	10—	15—	25 & over	Not known	
Scarlet Fever ...	9	—	2	3	4	—	—	—	—	7
Whooping Cough...	8	2	1	—	4	1	—	—	—	—
Acute Poliomyelitis	6	—	—	1	4	1	—	—	—	6
Measles ...	70	—	9	23	27	6	1	3	1	2
Acute Pneumonia...	5	—	—	—	—	1	1	3	—	—
Erysipelas ...	3	—	—	—	1	—	—	2	—	1
Total ...	101	2	12	27	40	9	2	8	1	16

Notification rates for Taunton Rural District compared with those of England and Wales taken as a whole are calculated per 1,000 civilian population, except Puerperal Pyrexia which is calculated per 1,000 total live and still births :—

Diseases.	No. of Notifications.	Rates for	
		Taunton R.D.	England and Wales.
Scarlet Fever ...	9	0.47	1.50
Whooping Cough ...	8	0.42	3.60
Measles ...	70	3.69	8.39
Acute Pneumonia ...	5	0.26	0.70
Erysipelas ...	3	0.16	0.17
Puerperal Pyrexia ...	—	—	5.81
Acute Poliomyelitis ...	6	0.32	0.18
Food Poisoning ...	—	—	0.17
Typhoid Fever ...	—	—	0.00
Paratyphoid ...	—	—	0.01
Diphtheria ...	—	—	0.02
Meningococcal Infection..	—	—	0.03
Smallpox ...	—	—	0.00

TUBERCULOSIS

The following table gives the number of new cases of respiratory and non-respiratory Tuberculosis notified during 1950 and mortality from the disease :—

New Cases and Mortality during 1950

Ages in Years.			New Cases.				Deaths.			
			Resp'tory.		Non-Resp.		Resp'tory.		Non-Resp.	
			M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
0 — 1	...	..	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
1 — 5	...	..	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
5 — 10	...	..	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
10 — 15	...	..	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	1
15 — 20	...	..	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
20 — 25	...	..	3	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
25 — 35	.	..	3	6	1	—	—	—	—	—
35 — 45	..	..	3	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
45 — 55	...	..	2	1	1	—	—	—	—	—
55 — 65	..		1	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
65 and up	..		—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Not known	...		—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total	...	...	29		4		1		1	

At the end of the year, the Tuberculosis Register contained the names and addresses of 94 cases of pulmonary Tuberculosis and 20 cases of non-pulmonary Tuberculosis.

No action had to be taken under the Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations, 1925, relating to persons suffering from pulmonary Tuberculosis employed in the milk trade, or under Section 172 of the Public Health Act, 1936, relating to the compulsory removal to hospital of persons suffering from Tuberculosis.

Prevention of Blindness

No arrangements have been made by the Local Authority with respect to the prevention of Blindness, under Section 176 of the Public Health Act, 1936. Cases of Ophthalmia Neonatorum are notified by the Doctors to the Public Health Department of the County Council and when necessary are admitted to the Taunton Isolation Hospital.

Diphtheria Prophylaxis

Immunisation against Diphtheria continues to be carried out by the Medical Staff of the Somerest County Council and by the Medical Practitioners in the District. The County Council's Immunisation Scheme, which was begun in Taunton Rural District during 1941, continues to make progress, and the following figures supplied by the County Council show the condition of the child population as regards immunisation at the end of 1950 :—

Pre-School Children : aged 0—4 years

Number Immunised.	% Immunised of Total Children in this Age Group.
745	50.64

School Children : aged 5—14 years

Number Immunised.	% Immunised of Total Children in this Age Group.
1,245	51.89

It is gratifying to note that no case of diphtheria was notified in the District during the course of the year.

In the recent Circulars (193/45 and 194/45), issued by the Ministry of Health, stress is rightly laid on ensuring primary inoculation of as many pre-school and school children as possible. At the same time it must be remembered that if Diphtheria is to be kept

under control, the state of resistance of children who have received primary immunisation must be maintained by re-inoculation at suitable intervals. Infants of the age of 8 to 9 months should be immunised because one of every two unimmunised contracting the disease under the age of one year, dies. By the time the child reaches school age, the primary stimulus of earlier immunisation has waned, and, to remedy this, every child should be given a reinforcing dose of antigen before he begins school attendance.

